

Committee(s): Establishment Committee	Date: 20 September 2018
Subject: Annual Staff Christmas lunches	Public
Report of: Town Clerk	For Decision
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Summary

The Annual Staff Christmas Lunches are an important and popular part of the festive calendar for City Corporation staff. The overall cost of the lunches in 2017 was £67,818.00 which was covered by a per head contribution from staff of £15.00 which amounted to £26,310.00. The total spend from this Committee's budget was therefore £41,508.00.

In 2014, the cost per head was £34.00 and this additional cost was covered by an increased staff contribution from £11.00 to £15.00 per person. The overall cost per head for the lunches in 2017 was increased to £35.00 per head with the additional costs being subsumed by staff contributions.

With rising food costs and a desire to maintain a high level of quality, the caterers selected for this year's lunches has requested a cost of £40.00 per head – an increase of £5.00 per head. Members are asked therefore to agree a £3.00 increase for staff and the remaining £2.00 to be financed from your Committee. The increase to the Christmas lunch budget would therefore be £4,200.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the increased costs for the lunches
- Agree the ongoing contribution which the Committee will make to the Annual Staff Lunches; and
- Agree the contribution that staff members attending should make to the cost of the Staff Annual Lunches

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London Corporation has provided hospitality for staff around the festive period for over twenty five years in the form of the Staff Annual Christmas Lunches. The lunches are organised on three consecutive days in

the Great Hall; all members of staff of the City Corporation are invited to attend on a first come, first served basis, owing to capacity constraints in the Hall. The invitations include non-Guildhall staff from the Barbican Centre, Open Spaces Department, Museum of London, civilian staff at the City of London Police, and non-teaching staff at the City's two independent schools.

2. Over three days, there is a maximum capacity of 2,100 people. Those attending the lunch are served a three course meal: a starter: a main course (either meat, fish or vegetarian) with vegetable accompaniments and sauces; a dessert; white and red wine, soft drinks; mince pies, and coffee or tea.
3. Most dietary requests are met from the standard per head cost (gluten free, dairy free, allergy free, vegan). Kosher meals are offered on request.

Current Position

1. The Chief Commoner grants the use of the Hall at a no user charge to the Committee. The full cost to hire the Great Hall over the four days (including one day set up) at the 2018 commercial rate would be £58,800 (although a commercial client may not pay the maximum hire rate).
2. The breakdown of expenditure for the 2017 lunches was as follows:

Expenditure item	£
Catering costs*	66,355
Toastmaster for three days	750
Printing costs (meal tickets, menu cards)	423
Gifts (crackers for top table, flowers for the Lady Mayoress)	40
Agency staff	250
Total	67,818
<i>Less staff contributions</i>	<i>26,310</i>
Grand total	<u>41,508</u>

*1,883 standard cost meals (£35) and 3 kosher meals (£150)

3. In addition to these costs, additional security staff are in duty and funded from the City Surveyor's local risk budget.
4. Some special dietary requirements are catered for at no additional cost including gluten free, allergies to monosodium glutamate (MSG), halal, dairy free, nut allergies and vegan. Kosher meals are also available on request for those who require them on religious grounds at a cost of £150 per person.
5. The kosher meal costs are higher than a standard meal because of the necessity of very specific items in keeping with strict religious rules but are very much in keeping with standard kosher meals fees. Only 3 members of staff requested the kosher option in 2017; 5 in 2016.

6. In 2014, the standard meal cost per head was £34.00 and this additional cost was covered by an increased staff contribution from £11.00 to £15.00 per person. The overall cost per head for the lunches in 2017 was increased to £35.00 per head with the additional costs being subsumed by staff contributions. Prior to 2014, the cost to staff for the lunch was £10 per person.
7. Over the years, the increasing popularity and success of the lunches, along with the growing expectation of a greater provision of food, and the rise in food prices, means that the 2017 prices are no longer sustainable.
8. The Cook and The Butler have catered for the lunches for the past two years and have held the price as competitively as possible. Feedback from staff from 2017 has been positive and so The Cook and the Butler has been selected to cater for the lunches for 2018

Options

1. Based on the attendance, the cost of the increase from The Cook and the Butler will be in the region of £10,500 which should be met by:
 - A. Increased contribution from the Committee taking the estimated total cost for £85,463.00 for 2018, and;
 - B. Increased contribution from staff from £15 per head to £18 per head

Proposals

- With rising food costs and a desire to maintain a high level of quality, the caterers selected for this year's lunches has requested a cost of £40.00 per head – an increase of £5.00 per head. Members are asked therefore to agree the increased contribution which the Committee will make to the Annual Staff Christmas Lunches; and agree the contribution that staff members attending should make to the cost of the Staff Lunches

Implications

The Human Resources Department have confirmed that there are no HR implications

Conclusion

The Annual Staff Christmas Lunches are an important and popular part of the festive calendar for City of London staff. Given rising food prices and demand from staff for more substantial meals, it is inevitable that after four years, a modest increase in cost is warranted. The Committee is therefore asked to approve a £3.00 increase in the staff contribution, and a £2.00 increase in the Committee's contribution (£4,200).

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